

William Curtis

— A Victorian Englishman Who Introduced Western Vegetables and Ham into Japan —

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Abstract

日本への西洋野菜の導入には多くの欧米人が関与してきた。当初中国（経由）やオランダ等から少しずつ入り、長崎出島のオランダ屋敷等で栽培されるが、本格的に導入栽培されるのは1859年7月の横浜港開港前後からである。

その横浜界隈で西洋野菜導入に大きな役割を果たした人びとの中にビクトリア朝のイギリス人がある。ウイリアム・カーティス、ウイリアム・ヘンリー・スミス、それにマイケル・バックワース・ベイリーの3人である。

西洋野菜の栽培はその後こうした外国人居留者や商人、外交官等の指導やアドバイスを受けた日本人によって根岸、磯子、吉田新田、子安、生麦等の横浜近郊農村へと普及、更には産業政策としての政府の奨励もあって全国へと広がったが、その揺籃期におけるイギリス人の貢献には大きなものがあった。プラント・ハンターの国イギリスからの「お返し」とも言えようか。

本稿では上記3人のビクトリア朝イギリス人の内、ウイリアム・カーティスについて、出身地グレイブズエンド及び来日前に滞在し新婚生活を送ったサザンプトンでの現地調査、グレイブズエンド図書館、ロンドンの国立公文書館、英国国勢調査記録、更には来日後居留した横浜の開港資料館等を通じて収集した資料をもとにその生涯を考察する。

Introduction

When Japan, which enjoyed a long period of 'closed door' or national isolation policy, was thrown open to the outside world towards the end of the feudalistic Tokugawa Samurai Shogunate (1603-1867), a lot of British people came to Japan, and settled at Yokohama. They contributed to the introduction into Japan and Britain of a variety of customs and industries, which included plants and vegetables and the art of growing them as well as food, clothes and industrial products.

Among those who were engaged in the importation and exportation of

plants between Japan and Britain were John Joshua Jarman (1840–1892: the first large scale exporter of Japanese lilies to Britain) and Isaac Bunting (1850–1936: a Colchester nursery man who exported a variety of lilies including the beautiful snow-white *lilium longiflorum*, alias *Erabu Lily*, which he himself ‘discovered’ in c.1880 on Okinoerabu Island, Kagoshima). Japanese lilies had been introduced into Europe by the German surgeon Philipp Franz von Siebold and the British plant hunter and botanist John Gould Veitch and become very popular for their variety and big flowers.

On the other hand among noteworthy introducers of Western vegetables at that time were the following three Englishmen: Messrs William Curtis (1834 – bef. 1891: a seaman turned hotelkeeper from Gravesend, Kent), W.H. Smith (1839–1884: a Royal Marine lieutenant turned businessman from East Tuddenham, Norfolk, commonly known as “Public-Spirited Smith” owing to his willingness to devote his spare time to the community) and the Rev. Michael Buckworth Bailey (1828–1899: the Indian-born chaplain with the British Legation, Yokohama). Another vegetable grower Eduardo Loureiro, who is referred to in the then H.B.M. Minister Sir Rutherford Alcock’s *The Capital of Tycoon* as successfully rearing a large garden full of English vegetables such as Brussels sprouts, Jerusalem artichokes, lettuces, and cabbages from seeds the minister received from England, seems to have been a merchant and/or employee with an English company.

It seems certain that there was a constant demand for the western vegetables, for it was quite natural that the foreign residents in Yokohama wanted to have food of a familiar taste.

All the three above-mentioned Victorians ran a farm at Yokohama, though differing in size but not in kind, grew and sold Western vegetables, and taught Japanese farmers how to grow them.

In this paper I shall give a brief, though admittedly incomplete, sketch of the life and achievements of William Curtis based on the information I obtained from my visits to his birthplace Gravesend and Southampton where he married and lived before he came to Japan as well as information kindly provided by two descendants of William Curtis: one who lives in Australia and the other in Southampton and documents I obtained at the Gravesend Library, the National

Archives, Kew, London and the Yokohama Archives of History, Yokohama.

Father John James and William Curtis in England

William Curtis was born in Gravesend, a town on the south bank of the Thames, in northwest Kent, England, in 1834 between John James Curtis (b.1805) and Elizabeth Curtis (maiden name Shillito(e); born in 1803 in Yorkshire.)¹ According to the 1841 English Census, when he was 6 years old, he had five siblings: Elizabeth (13), John (8), James (4), Henry (2), and Mary Ann (1). All of them were born at Gravesend.

His father John James Curtis, probably a Norman descent as the surname Curtis derives from the Old French '*curteis*' meaning courteous,² was a successful publican (victualler) who owned the Puncheon, a tavern and hotel, at 65 West Street, Gravesend. The town, which is now a busy commercial town with about as many as 50 pubs in business, has one of the oldest surviving markets in the country with its earliest charter dating from 1268. In 1401 a Royal Grant was given to the town, allowing the townspeople to operate boats (later known as "Long Ferry") between London and the town. Travelling by boat was a preferred form of passage because the road journey was infested with highwaymen, active, especially, at Blackheath, southeast London, though the town also served for at least two centuries as one of the "stages" for Stagecoaches from London to Canterbury, Dover and Faversham and vice versa. The major business and industry of the town were the shipping trades and the cement and paper industries. Gravesend is also known for Pocahontas (c.1595–1617), the Virginia Indian chief's daughter notable for having assisted British colonial settlers at Jamestown, Virginia, who died and was buried there.

The article below gives a clear picture of the town of Gravesend at the end of the 18th century, shortly before his father's birth:

Most of the outward-bound ships complete their cargoes and take in provisions here, for that the town is generally full of seamen, and here are several good inns, taverns, and other such houses for their accommodation, and that of travelers.

Most of the Dutch turbot-vessels lie at this place, from whence they supply the London market as they think fit. There is likewise a well frequented ferry for passengers, horses, cattle, and carriages from hence across the Thames into Essex. All which cause much bustle and a continued hurry of business, and besides bring great profit to this town.³

In 1833 John bought the above-mentioned pub Puncheon, which served as one of the centres of the passenger trade for London, spent £3,000 on extensions, and built 18 letting bedrooms and a dining room 70-foot long.⁴ The tavern and hotel was first opened in 1789 as the Rhum Butt and altered to the Rum Puncheon in 1811, [the Talbot around 1844] and then renamed the New Falcon in 1851.⁵ The name change may have been forced by the loss of rum by theft by the Thames river pirates which the West Indiamen frequently incurred at that time after they had arrived in the Thames.⁶ How successful and reputed his hotel was could be read in the following feature article about the hotel which appeared in the *Gravesend Omnibus*:⁷

HOTELS AND THEIR PROPRIETORS

No.4, THE PUNCHEON

We forget what species of tub or cask that comic-loving young gentleman, Bacchus, is generally seated upon, but perhaps it may be the Puncheon, in which case Mr. Curtis could not have a more appropriate sign. Of course everybody is aware that this hotel is situated in West Street, with an extensive frontage to the river, and when steam boat passengers are undecided what house to patronize, they generally choose this from its contiguity to the town pier, and its clean and comfortable appearance.

There is scarcely any necessity for us to describe either the Puncheon or Curtis, for although it is like most other hotels in the town, except the Falcon, viz., frequented by a mixed company, still the reader is assured that he will meet with good cheer on a liberal and economical scale. The "ordinary" supporters had no need to walk so far as the Tivoli for a cheap dinner, because they can get it here in better style,

in a long and airy room, with a magnificent view of the Thames. There are plenty of private rooms too, plenty of good wine and grog, and plenty of every description of comfort, which, with good attendance and moderate charges, we should like to know what more any reasonable person can require?

And a gazetteer of Gravesend, John Tallis, described the inn and tavern as:⁸

Puncheon Inn, (Curtis) 65, West Street. The Puncheon is a tavern of great respectability, well adapted for the accommodation of gentlemen engaged in commercial pursuits, and visitors. The views from the windows and balconies are extremely beautiful; the river, Tilbury Fort, and the Essex coast can, from no other house in the town, be seen to greater advantage. From the river front, the accommodations for landing and embarking are convenient, and the wines and viands are not excelled at any other tavern. Here the Free Mason's lodge is held, "No.91, Lodge of Freedom," which is now in a flourishing state, The accommodations provided by Brother Curtis, are of the best description.

His own advertisement about his hotel went as follows:⁹

GRAVESEND, AT THE PUNCHEON TAVERN AND HOTEL

J Curtis, invites visitors to his splendid accommodations; the sitting rooms facing the river are the theme of admiration. In a spacious elegant room facing the Thames, commanding an uninterrupted view for Miles, a Table d' Hote, combining fish and flesh of the finest description, is provided daily at 2 o'Clock precisely — 2s. each. Wines and Spirits of the most approved vintages.

The celebrated Judge and Jury Society who have created such a sensation in London are about holding their sittings at this establishment aided by all the original talent. For particulars see small Bill.

- ❖ Parties can be accommodated by the day or month on most moderate terms.

The tavern and hotel was prosperous for some time. Pigot and Co.'s *Royal National and Commercial Directory and Topography of the County of Kent* (November 1839) records Puncheon Hotel, James John Curtis, West St. as one of the 12 inns and hotels at Gravesend. But Curtis got into financial difficulties and it was taken over in the late 1830's (or in the 40's, some records say) by Mr E. Pallister,¹⁰ who renamed it the "New Falcon" and made it a high class hotel noted for white fish dinners - not catering for the public bar trade.¹¹ The riverside part of the hotel closed in 1906, and the hotel became the New Falcon Laundry, closing in 1960 and demolished in 1972, the New Falcon (pub) lasting until February 2008.¹²

An account for suppers and drinks, etc. dated 29 July 1835, which has an engraving of the hotel facing the river with a steamboat and a sailing boat in it at the head, went as follows:¹³

**J. Curtis,
Puncheon Tavern & Hotel,
GRAVESEND.**

Expensive Dining Room by the Side of the River.

SITTING ROOMS FACING THE RIVER. _TABLE D'HOTE EVERY DAY.

1835

29 July	<i>Suppers</i>	2 — 10 — 0	
	<i>Ale & Beer</i>	3 — 0	
	<i>Sherry</i>	2 — 15 — 0	
	<i>Port</i>	10 — 0	
	<i>Brandy</i>	6 — 0	
	<i>Rum</i>	4 — 0	
	<i>Gin</i>	4 — 0	
	<i>Helens(?)</i>	6 — 0	<i>(Hollands?) — gin</i>
	<i>Cigars</i>	5 —	
	<i>Tobac</i>	1 —	
	<i>Soda water grog</i>	2 — 4	
	<i>Shafer(?)</i>	1	

(The underlined 3 items are indecipherable by the author of this paper.)

Near the present Rum Puncheon (reopened in October, 2008) stands the ancient (16th - century) Gravesend tavern, the “Three Daws”. It is the oldest public house in the town still in business. In the past it was used by sailors to escape the press gang and smugglers and ply their trade. The pub celebrated the 400th anniversary in 1965.¹⁴

The author of this paper has been unable to find any information about his son William’s childhood, education and move to Southampton yet, but in 1851, William Curtis appears in the England Census as P.C. Apprentice, aged 15, born in Kent, Patient at an infirmary St Mary’s Extra, Southampton with 30 other inpatients. He then seems to have worked as a merchant seaman.

On 15th January in 1857, at the age of 22, he married Harriet Perkins, nee Vaughan (born in about 1835 in Southampton; the widow of John Perkins), at the Above Bar (Independent) Chapel, Vincent’s Walk, Southampton. The Chapel, which later on became the Above Bar Congregational Chapel, was destroyed in 1940 by enemy action (the German Luftwaffe bombing) and many of the congregation and the minister moved to the nearby St Andrew’s Presbyterian Church (now Avenue St Andrew’s United Reformed Church). Harriet had one daughter Eliza Emma by her marriage with John. In the marriage certificate William is recorded as Seaman, Merchant service, and his father John James as Inn Keeper.¹⁵ They lived at 40 Oxford Street, which is close to the former terminus of the trains from London, Mayflower Park, and the wharfs of Southampton and is now quite a fashionable, restaurant studded street. The No 40 building has been rebuilt, but the neighbouring houses still retain a Victorian feel. Before her marriage, Harriet had lived at St Michael’s Square and then at Lansdown Hill at the time of her marriage with William.

In Southampton, and then in Yokohama, they parented 6 sons and 3 daughters: Alfred William (1858–1944: born in Southampton), George Vaughan (1860–1943: ditto), Clara Vaughan (1861–1947: ditto), Walter Vaughan (1863–1942: ditto), James Vaughan (1866–?: born in Yokohama), Adela Marion (1868?–1960: ditto), Frederick Joseph (1869–1915: ditto), Edwin Shillito (1873?–1953: ditto), and

Mabel Grace (1874–1953: born in Southampton).¹⁶

In 1861 William lived in Padwell Road, St Mary, Southampton with his wife, four children (See above), one housemaid and one nurse. His occupation was Ship Steward.¹⁷ Padwell Road is now a small street lined with rather small houses mainly lived in by people of Asian origin. Incidentally there are graves of several of William Curtis's descendants in the Southampton Cemetery, about one kilometre to the north-west.

William's name appears in the indexes to the registers of seamen's names kept by the *Registrar General of Shipping and its predecessor 1860–1863* as a crew of the *Martha Pope*,¹⁸ a 162-ton ship belonging to Liverpool which was built at Waterford in 1830 with destined voyages to Gibraltar, Mediterranean, Liverpool and West Indies.¹⁹

William Curtis in Yokohama

In 1863 William Curtis arrived in Japan as a sailor (an English apprentice cook) at the age of 22. We do not know what brought him to Japan, though it may be easily surmised that he, a son of a once successful innkeeper, who lived in Gravesend and Southampton, both very busy ports frequented by ships and sailors travelling all over the world, must have heard a lot about the opening of Japanese ports to the outer world and possibilities of staying and making profits out of business in Japan.

Soon after his arrival at Yokohama, he is thought to have started cultivating foreign vegetables such as cauliflower, carrot, asparagus, tomato, potato, lettuce, radish, onion, and others to fulfill the requirements of the Foreign Settlement, and made a great fortune out of this farming.²⁰ Incidentally as is shown below Gravesend, his birthplace and hometown, was well known for its market gardens:

For many years past there have been great improvements made in the lands near the town, by converting them into gardens, of which there are about seventy acres, with the produce of which, not only the shipping, the town itself, and the neighbouring country is supplied for several miles round, but the London

markets too, their *asparagus* in particular, which is called by the name of *Gravesend grass*, is esteemed the finest in England, being mostly preferred to that of Battersea, and yet this place is said to have been formerly noted for want of garden stuff in it.²¹

Seeds of western vegetable were very precious at that time and the foreigners were cautious making it difficult for the Japanese to obtain them,²² though Curtis seems to have allowed a Tatsugoro Shimizu, a farmer at Negishi Village, to grow cabbage out of the seeds gathered by him on his farm.²³ The cultivation of western vegetables by Curtis, Loureiro, W.H. Smith, the Rev M.B. Bailey, officials at consulates and local government offices, etc. gradually attracted the attention of local farmers and spread to neighbouring villages such as Negishi, Isoko, Koyasu, and Namamugi.²⁴

In August 1864 he bought The Royal British Hotel from its founder and owner, a Jamaican-born black Briton called 'Baron' Macaulay (J. B. Macaulay), and renamed it the Commercial Hotel.²⁵ It was a two-storeyed wooden hotel established in July 1862 with a coffee room, bowling alleys (the second of its kind in Japan after the first one in Nagasaki), and a billiards saloon.

We do not know exactly why and on what sort of financial background he started the hotel business, but he must have at least had the knack of the business because he had been born into a family headed by a successful publican and owner of a hotel at Gravesend, a busy seaport crowded with pubs, hotels, and seamen and travelers from all corners of the world. He also had lived in Southampton, another big seaport, from where the Pilgrim Fathers sailed in 1620 aboard the *Mayflower* and where German and other foreign vessels began calling from 1857 onwards after the coming of the railway and a series of open and dry docks in the 1840s.

An advertisement of the Royal British Hotel which appeared in *The Japan Herald* on October 25th, 1862 went as follows:

**ROYAL BRITISH HOTEL
NEARLY OPPOSITE THE**

**Residence of H.B.M's Consul,
Yokohama**

**by
J. B. Macaulay**

Every accommodation for
Ladies and Families.
THIS HOTEL is admirably adapted
For the residence of Gentlemen
visiting Yokohama for Commercial
Purposes — whilst for Private residence
For Families it is particularly recom-
mended by its situation and internal ar-
rangements. Comfort and moderate
charges will be found to prevail and to
recommend it to residents in China, &c.,
visiting our beautiful country as a
Sanatorium.

An Excellent Billiard Room, and
Bowling Alley.
Horses kept for hire.

Visitors are requested not to confound this with
The Yokohama Hotel.
Yokohama, 25th October, 1862.

Macaulay was formerly in charge of the bar of the Yokohama Hotel, the first hotel in Yokohama established on 24th February in 1860 by C.J. Huffnagel. Huffnagel was an ex-captain of the Dutch brig *Nassau* (a powder ship with two masts and square sails belonging to Mr Nordhoeck Hegt, a Dutch Master Mariner and trader/merchant who later was involved in the foundation of the *Japan Gazette* in 1867 and founded The Gaiety Theatre at Honmachi-dori in 1870.) Ernest Satow, the British scholar, diplomat, and Japanologist, stayed at the hotel for two months in 1862 before he settled in the British Legation as a student

interpreter. Among other guests at the Yokohama Hotel were Sir Rutherford Alcock, the British Minister and author of the *Capital of the Tycoon*, P.F. Siebold, the German physician, and his son Alexander, Mikhail Bakunin, a well-known Russian revolutionist in exile, Charles Wirgman, a British caricaturist (cartoonist) and the publisher of *The Japan Punch*, and so forth.²⁶

The closing of the Royal British Hotel appeared in *The Japan Herald* (August 13th, 1864) as below:

Royal British Hotel

The undersigned has the honor to inform the public that having disposed of his interest in the above Hotel, it will be closed on the 30th instant.

The undersigned would beg to tender his hearty thanks to the Public for the very liberal support which they have always afforded him.

THOMAS B. M'CAULAY

Yokohama, Aug. 13th, 1864.

In the same page, and directly above the advertisement, the Commercial Hotel announced its plan of opening as follows:

Commercial Hotel, Yokohama

The proprietors have the honor to inform the Residents of Yokohama and Visitors that they have taken the premises formerly know as

The Royal British Hotel,

which they purpose to open on the 10th

of September under the new name

Commercial Hotel.

Believing that there is requirement here for a really First-Class Hotel, they will endeavor to merit for that establishment such a reputation; and having had a considerable experience they feel a confidence that they shall succeed in rendering it worthy of general support.

Private Apartments, Bed-rooms and Sitting-rooms en suite, and every accommodation for Ladies and Families can be engaged by the week or month.

Billiard Room and Bowling Alley with separate entrance.

The Cuisine will be under able and experienced management.

Wines and Spirits of the best quality only will be supplied.

(Ads in *The Japan Herald* [No.129, August 13th, 1864], and the Supplement to *The Japan Herald*. [No. 131, August 27th, 1864.])

In October the opening of the hotel, though later recollected as a quite third-rate one by a contributor to the *Japan Gazette*²⁷, was advertised as follows:

The Proprietors of

THE COMMERCIAL HOTEL

have the honor to inform their friends and the public that they

Have now opened that Establishment,

and beg to request the favor of a call to inspect their arrange-

ments, which they believe will meet the approval of all.

The proprietors having been long connected with the P. & O. Co.'s Service, have had great experience in the requirements of travelers and residents in the East.

In a comfortable, light and roomy Dining-room, an Excellent Table d' hote will be served daily at 7 P.M.

There are several suites of Private Rooms, nicely furnished and fitting for the residence of ladies and families visiting from China, India, &c.

The Bed-rooms will be found to be furnished with that attention to comfort so desirable, but so seldom to be met with in places of public accommodation.

The Billiard Tables and Bowling Alleys are all refurbished and redecorated.

In short, no expense has been spared to make the Hotel adapted, as no attention shall be wanting to render the accommodation all that can be required for the wants of Visitors.

No. 86.

(Supplement to *The Japan Herald*.
No.140. Oct. 29th 1864.)

On Nov. 18th, 26th and Dec. 3rd 1864 the ad had the same contents, but started with: The Proprietor of The COMMERCIAL HOTEL has the honor (The underline is mine.)

A much shorter advertisement on the hotel below appeared in *The Japan Herald* from 24th December 1864 till 19th August 1865 almost every week.

THE COMMERCIAL HOTEL
No. 86.
MAIN-ST., YOKOHAMA.
The best Wines and Spirits always on
hand.

On 11th November in 1865 he advertised the opening of his butcher shop in *The Japan Herald* as follows:

W. CURTIS
Begs to notify that he commences slaughtering

THIS DAY.

November 8th,
At No. 86, Yokohama,
And it is his intention to supply
The very best Beef at \$0.11 Φ lb.

He seems to have had a farm for sheep and swine at Yamate, Motomachi.²⁸ He also seems to have introduced English swine, which was then crossed with Japanese swine.²⁹ Around this time the aforementioned Englishman, the “Public-Spirited Smith”, another introducer of western vegetables, also had a pig farm at a nearby village Kitakata-mura and taught how to crossbreed. Pig raising in Kanagawa was thus started by foreign residents at Yamate, Yokohama, probably shortly after the introduction of pigs by Chinese, and spread to farmers in neighbouring villages.³⁰

On 25th March, 1866 James Vaughan, William’s 4th son, was born at the

Commercial Hotel and was christened by the Rev. Mr Bailey, the chaplain with the British Legation, at Christ Church Yokohama.³¹ The Rev. (Michael Buckworth) Bailey was yet another Victorian who introduced western vegetables into Japan.

In 1868 he left the management of the Royal British Hotel to a Thompson and opened the International Hotel,³² a two-storeyed stone and wooden hotel with nice port views and the best billiard room in Japan at that time. The hotel at 18 Kaigan Doori (Beach Street), Yokohama was a representative hotel in Yokohama before the opening by the “Public-Spirited Smith” (W.H. Smith) in 1870 of The Grand Hotel which accommodated long-staying guests and the *Oyatoi-Gaikokujin* (foreign experts employed by the Japanese government, local governments, companies, schools, etc. to introduce advanced knowledge and technologies from Europe and America) as well as ordinary guests.³³

In 1869 William’s 5th son Frederick Joseph Curtis was born in Yokohama. He was then educated in Southampton and Devon, England, moved to Chefoo, North China, made a great success as a merchant, and was decorated by both the king of Britain and the emperor of China.³⁴

According to the 1871 England censuses, William and Harriet’s eldest daughter Clara (aged 10) lived at Millbrook as a pupil (scholar) in the household of Ms Sarah E Everett, their 3rd and 4th sons Walter (8) and James (5), also pupils (scholars, boarders), lived in St Mary’s Road under the charge of Mr & Mrs Monk, and their 2nd daughter Adela (3) and 5th son Frederick (1) lived in Oxford Street as nurse children with Ms Mary Ann Barrett.

Their 6th and last son Edwin Shillito was born in Yokohama in 1873. In 1874, however, William and Harriet’s last child Mabel Grace Curtis was born, not in Yokohama but in Southampton (Millbrook Road, Freemantle). (Could this mean that Harriet had returned to Southampton by then because of William’s affair/relationship with Okane touched upon later?)

There is a book which says that William Curtis came to Japan as a railway engineer and instructed the construction of the railway between Shimbashi and Yokohama in Meiji 7 (1874),³⁵ but this sounds dubious, for no England censuses or other Japanese documents record or hint his connection with railway construction, though tradition also supports the story.

The same book says Curtis started producing ham, bacon (and sausage) at

his hotel Hakubatei (White Horse Inn), Totsuka in 1874 and sold it to foreign residents in and around Yokohama.³⁶

Regarding the exact year in which William started producing ham, however, there are several theories ranging from 1874 to 1884/5, and Saito Takio presumes it to have been between 1877 and 1886.³⁷

According to *Totsukaku Kyodoshi (The Local History of Totsuka Ward)*, Curtis bred about 200 cows and pigs and started producing ham in the late 1870s at a factory attached to his hotel at Totsuka. Over ten foreign residents were employed at the factory to make ham and butter, which were used for both home consumption and sales to foreign residents. The production method was kept secret for some time, but Saito Kakuji was allowed to enter the workshop thanks to the help of Okane (Kane Kato: daughter of a tinker, who was a beautiful maid at a tea house frequented by Curtis and fell in love and cohabited with him despite her parents' opposition). Saito thus learned and mastered the know-how of seasoning the meat with salt, sugar, and pepper, and then smoking it while preventing colour change with the use of saltpeter, and set up a ham production company in 1881 together with Saito Mampei and Masuda Naozo. It was how Kamakura Ham was born, though the product was sold as *Rakan*, not as ham, at first. The hotel was an extension of the house built by Okane and served for foreign guests only.³⁸ *The History of Totsuka Ward*, however, says that he supplied ham not to his hotel at Totsuka but to the Shakespeare Inn at Shimokashiwao Village run by an Englishman named George Paunceforte, (an actor turned hotelier³⁹) and sold part of it to foreign residents in Yokohama.⁴⁰

On the subject of the production technique other sources say that Curtis kept it secret until 1884 when his factory caught fire and the fire was extinguished by neighbours (Masuda Naozo included), to whom he 'disclosed' the process as an expression of gratitude. The formula was also revealed to Saito Mampei (Manzo), a former head of the family for whom (O)Kane worked as a housemaid.⁴¹

Kamakura, which thus initiated ham production in Japan, continued to manufacture more than half of ham and bacon made in Japan well into the beginning of Showa Era (1926–89).⁴²

Incidentally ham itself seems to have been made and eaten (together with bread) much earlier by Dutchmen who lived in Nagasaki.⁴³

By around this time it appears that William left (part of) the management of the International Hotel to his son Alfred William, for the *Chronicle & Directory for China, Japan, & The Philippines* for the Year 1874 records him as a proprietor and publisher, Hong Kong *Times*, 5, Duddell Street, and his son Curtis, A.W. as Junr. Proprietor, International Hotel, 18 Yokohama (along with Miss E. Winsler).

The same chronicle and directory for 1875 records him as: Japan Hotel. 44, Yokohama, and Proprietor and publisher, Hong Kong *Times*, 5, Duddell Street. There is no mention of International Hotel, though the same directory next year (1876) shows him as: International Hotel, 18, Bund, Yokohama [with Curtis, A.W., assistant.]. In 1877 he appears as: Restaurateur, 61 Yokohama [No mention of his son], in 1878 and 1879 as Mitsubishi S.S. Co., Yokohama [Curtis, A.W., Mitsubishi S.S. Co., Tokio], in 1880 The Commercial, 31 Yokohama [Curtis, A.W., Mitsubishi S.S. Co., Assistant, Yokohama], and in 1881 Mitsubishi S.S. Co., Tokio [Curtis, A.W. JD Carroll & Co., Assistant, Yokohama.]

The 1881 England Census shows his wife Harriet Curtis as: 46 (married), servant, female, Residence: London, 30 Onslow Sqr, (Brompton, Kensington), head nurse in the household of Robert F. Burrows, late captain in the Army. According to the same Census, his daughter Clara Curtis aged 20 lived at Hampden House Academy, Ashwater, Devon and worked as music teacher. Other children: Adela (13), Frederick (11), Edwin (8), and Mabel (7) also lived there as scholars (boarders). This may mean that William and Harriet had by now been separated, though not divorced, because of William's relationship with Okane and/or their (or Harriet's) wish to give their younger children education in England as could have been customary for the British parents living abroad.

After 1882 (until 1889) William is believed to have lived and ran Hakubatei Hotel (White Horse Inn) at Totsuka, under the name of either Kuni Masuda or Kane Kato as it was out of the Foreign Settlement.⁴⁴

In the chronicle and directory mentioned above, however, he appears as follows: 1882–84 Mitsubishi S.S. Co., Tokio, and 1885–87 Nagasaki Dock Yard, Clerk, Nagasaki (till 1887). In 1886 his son Curtis, A.W. appears as Japan Mail S.S. Co., assistant, store department, Yokohama. For 1888 and 1889 there is no mention of Curtis, W. but in 1890 he appears again as: Cobb. & Co., Carriage builder and livery stable keepers, 38 Yokohama (till 1892), whereas Curtis, A.W.

as Japan Mail S.S. Co., assistant, store department, Yokohama and W.H. Strachan & Co., Clerk, Yokohama. [Curtis, A.W. is recorded as Editor and manager, "Kobe Herald", Kobe, from 1894 to 1910.]

In around 1890 Curtis seems to have fallen into heavy debt due to dull business of his hotel at Totsuka triggered by the introduction of railways, left Japan without notice and lived in Shanghai, but died there soon followed by Okane who had come to Shanghai with her two children.⁴⁵

On the other hand, in the 1891 England Census his wife Harriet appears as: Widow, retired nurse: 56, resided at Loughton, Epping, Essex with her daughter Mable G Curtis 17 (single). As Harriet is registered as widow in this Census, we may safely speculate that William died either in the latter half of 1890 or early in 1891.

According to Alan Frederick Curtis, a great grandson of William Curtis, who lives in Australia, William's children succeeded on their own ways. Alfred William (1858–1944) who died in Kobe at the age of 87 was called "The Grand Old Man of Japan" and received condolences from Winston Churchill when he passed away. George Vaughan (1860–1943) studied and taught art in Paris, then moved to America and was active as a portrait painter, painter of famous horses, and art teacher. Clara Vaughan (1861–1947) taught music in England and then moved to America. Walter Vaughan (1863–1942) became a hotel proprietor and farmer in England, went bankrupt, and came to Yokohama. About James Vaughan (b. 1866) little is known. Adela Marion (1868–1960) led a vegetarian self-supporting Christian Contemplative Community called "The White Ladies" in Devon. Frederick Joseph (1869–1915) spent 15 years in the merchant marine, settled in Chefoo, North China, became a successful merchant, and was allowed by George V to wear the Insignia of the Fifth Grade of the Imperial Order of the Double Dragon. Edwin Shillito (1873–1953) lived in Chefoo, and then moved to South Africa. Mabel Grace (1874–1953), the youngest child, became a farmer's wife at Hemel Hempstead, Hartfordshire. His descendants are now scattered around the world and live in such countries as Britain, Australia, the USA and New Zealand.

Concluding remarks

Thanks to England Censuses from 1841 to 1891, *the Japan Herald*, *the Japan Times*, *the Japan Gazette*, *the Japan Weekly Mail*, books and booklets kept at the Gravesend Library, Kent, the National Archives, Kew, Yokohama Archives of History, Yokohama, etc., as well as information from two of William's descendants and from my visits to Gravesend (William Curtis's birthplace) and Southampton (his domicile before his settlement in Yokohama), I could compile a brief illustration of the Victorian seaman turned hotelier William Curtis.

What is clear now is that he was born and brought up at Gravesend, Kent by a publican and hotelier John James Curtis and his wife Elizabeth, lived in Southampton before and after marriage with Harriet Vaugham, came to Japan in 1863, ran hotels, and introduced into Yokohama western vegetable and ham production, which gradually spread to other areas in Japan. William Curtis thus contributed a lot in terms of cultural exchange between Japan and Britain.

The sketch is, however, still patchy and incomplete and there remain a number of things left to be clarified, for example, a) when and why did he decide to come to Japan and set up a hotel business, b) on what ship did he come to Japan, c) the relationship between William Curtis and the Japanese woman (O) Kane, and d) where and how he lived and died after he left Japan.

I shall carry on further investigation into the above questions and try to produce a clearer picture of William Curtis.

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Notes :

- ◇ This paper is a research report of the author's visit in summer 2009 to the National Archives in London, Gravesend and its Library, Southampton, and Yokohama sponsored by Shigakukan University, to which I would like to express my sincere gratitude.
- ◇ My special thanks also go to: Mr Alan Frederick Curtis who generously gave me a great

deal of information on the Curtis Family, Mrs Caroline Kennedy, nee Curtis, who kindly showed me around Southampton, and Mr Christoph Bull, District Manager, Gravesend Libraries, who helped me find information on Curtis at the Gravesend Library.

- ¹ cf. 1841 England Census (RG HO107 P.458 Fol7/22 Pa.37)
- ² Information by Mrs Caroline Kennedy, nee Curtis.
- ³ Edward Hasted, *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent*, Volume III (1797), compiled by J.W. Brown and reprinted by Local History Reprints, London (1996). (p. 323)
- ⁴ A letter dated 19th August, 1971, from Walter T.W. Woods, Borough Librarian, to K.T. Borrow, Esq. kept by the Gravesend Library, and *The Gravesend Reporter*, 27 October 1972.
- ⁵ Tom Baines, *Along the Waterfront and Beyond, Gravesend & Northfleet Public Houses*, (2009), a leaflet of The Rum Puncheon compiled by Tom Baines with no date and place of publication, obtained by the author in summer 2010 at the pub, and *The Gravesend Reporter*, Nov. 24, 1934.
- ⁶ F.C. Bowen, G.&D. reporter, Nov. 24, 1934. (Gravesend Library), and *The Gravesend Reporter* 27 October 1972 (Gravesend Library: L920+647·94)
- ⁷ *Gravesend Omnibus* Saturday, June 4, 1842. p. 31.
- ⁸ Gazetteer of Gravesend, John Tallis, 1839. Quoted in documents kept at the Gravesend Library. (G303).
- ⁹ *Gravesend Omnibus*, Saturday, July 9, 1842. p. 12.
- ¹⁰ *The Gravesend Reporter* (10, 24/11/1934).
- ¹¹ A letter dated 19th August, 1971, from Walter T.W. Woods, Borough Librarian, to K.T. Borrow, Esq. kept by the Gravesend Library, and *The Gravesend Reporter*, 27 October 1972.
- ¹² Tom Baines, *Along the Waterfront and Beyond, Gravesend & Northfleet Public Houses*, (2009), a leaflet of The Rum Puncheon compiled by Tom Baines with no date and place of publication.
- ¹³ Gravesend Library Collection (L920+647·94).
- ¹⁴ *The Reporter*, Friday, February 5, 1965.
- ¹⁵ Marriage certificate: 1857, 1st quarter, Southampton, Volume 2c, page 47.
- ¹⁶ Information by his great grandchild Alan F. Curtis, New South Wales, Australia.
- ¹⁷ Information from *Curtis McLachlan Family Tree* and 1861 England Census.
- ¹⁸ Catalogue Reference: BT/154/4 (Image Reference:74), p. 8/74.
- ¹⁹ Lloyd's Register of (British and Foreign) shipping: from 1st July 1859 to the 30th June 1860.
- ²⁰ Information from Mr Alan Frederic Curtis, great grandson of William Curtis and the compiler of *Curtis McLachlan Family Tree* and 'Chronology of introduction of western vegetables in Yokohama' by Yokohama City Environment Creation Department.

<http://www.city.yokohama.jp/me/kankyou/data/midori/113hyou.html>.

- ²¹ John W. Brown. (1996). *Hasted's History of Gravesend*. (Originally published in 1797 by W. Bristow of Canterbury, Kent as part of Volume III of *The History and Topographical Survey of the County of Kent* by Edward Hasted) p. 324. London: Local History Reprints.
- ²² Information from Curtis McLachlan Family Tree: <http://almar.tribalpages.com/tribe/browse?userid=almar&view=0&pid=1218&rand=409935702>.
cf. 'Chronology of introduction of western vegetables in Yokohama' by Yokohama City Environment Creation Department <http://www.city.yokohama.jp/me/kankyou/data/midori/113hyou.html>.
- cf. In c.1863 Crutis grew lettuce, cauliflower, asparagus, etc. at Yamate. (Yokohama-shiwa *Kaikojo Yokohamamonogatari* p. 21). *Shishiko, Sangyo-hen* (History of the City, Yokohama, Industries): Vegetables were grown at Yamate in c.1863 (Bunkyu 3).
- ²³ 'Chronology of introduction of western vegetables in Yokohama' by Yokohama City Environment Creation Department <http://www.city.yokohama.jp/me/kankyou/data/midori/113hyou.html>.
- ²⁴ Yokohama-shiwa *Kaikojo Yokohamamonogatari* p. 21-22.
- ²⁵ Yokohama City & Yokohama Shimbunsha, *Yokohama Hoteru Monogatari*. p. 9, 62.
- ²⁶ Ibid. pp. 59-63.
- ²⁷ *The JAPAN GAZETTE YOKOHAMA SEMI-CENTENNIAL* Specially Compiled and Published to Celebrate the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Opening of Japan to Foreign Trade. (1909). p. 56. (An article by Arthur Brent.)
- ²⁸ Cited in *Yokohama Archives of History News*. No.29. p. 8.
- ²⁹ Ibid.
- ³⁰ Ibid.
- ³¹ Sworn declaration by Hariette Curtis quoted in Family Group Record — 19 by Alan Frederick Curtis.
- ³² Yokohama Archives of History. (1998). *Yokohama Monono Hajime-ko* (Things Which Originated in Yokohama). Yokohama: Yokohama Archives of History. p. 40.
- ³³ Yokohama City & Yokohama Shimbunsha. Yokohama, 'Yokohama Hoteru Monogatari' (A Story of Hotels in Yokohama) Vol.10, Autumn 2005. p. 10.
- ³⁴ Family Group Record — 19 by Alan Frederick Curtis.
- ³⁵ Tomita, H. (1987). *Hakraijibutsu Kigen Jiten (A Dictionary of Goods and Institutions of Foreign Origin in Japan)*. Tokyo: Meicho Fukyuukai. p. 293.
- ³⁶ Ibid. p. 214, p. 293.
- ³⁷ Yokohama Archives of History. *Yokohama Archives of History News*. No.29. pp. 9-10.
- ³⁸ *Totsuka Kyodoshi* (The Local History of Totsuka) (1968). pp. 235-6. *Totsuka no Rekishi* (History of Totsuka) pp. 276-277.
- ³⁹ *Totsuka Kushi* (History of Totsuka Ward) p. 345.
- ⁴⁰ *Saito Shokai Jigyougaiyou* (Business outline of Saito Company) quoted in *Yokohama*

Archives of History News. p. 9. NB. There are a few different theories about when Curtis arrived and started the production of ham at Kamakura. (ibid.)

Totsuka Kushi (History of Totsuka) p. 345.

⁴¹ <http://m.weblio.jp/c/%E9%AA%BC%E6%82%9F/%E5%B3%A8%E3%83%AF%E7%B9%9D>, etc.

⁴² *Yokohama Archives of History News*. No.29. pp. 9–10.

⁴³ (ibid.) p. 293, *Wakan Samnsaizue* Vol.14, 105.

⁴⁴ Takio, Saito, 'Yazushu no Buta to Kamakurahamu' *Yokohama Archives of History News*. No.29. January 1990.

⁴⁵ Reminiscences by Siato Kakuji quoted in *Local History of Totsuka* published by Publication Committee of Local History of Totsuka. (1910). p. 237. *Totsuka no Rekishi* (History of Totsuka) pp. 277–278.

Appendix



The Rum Puncheon at Gravesend, Kent, reopened in 2008.



The Gravesend Ferry Terminal at the back of the Rum Puncheon.



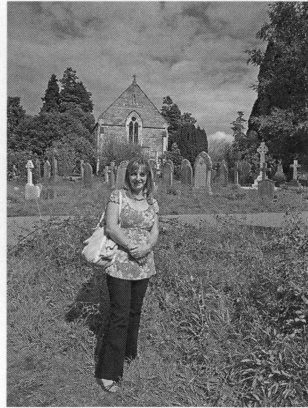
Oxford Street where William and his family lived before moving to Yokohama.



Lansdowne Hill where Harriet lived before she married William Curtis.



The house (left, now rebuilt) where William and his family lived.



Mrs Caroline Kennedy, nee Curtis at the Southampton Cemetery where many Curtis family members rest.